



WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION

NOTE FOR THE PRESS

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Note for the media/22
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WHO FRAMEWORK CONVENTION ON TOBACCO CONTROL: DEADLINE APPROACHES

Geneva - The World Health Organization (WHO) calls upon all countries not yet parties to the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (WHO FCTC) to act swiftly. Otherwise they will not be able to participate as full Parties in the governing body for the WHO FCTC, the Conference of the Parties (COP), when it meets for the first time early next year.

Countries must deposit the instrument of ratification (or equivalent) in New York by 8 November 2005 to participate with full powers in the first Conference of the Parties.

The COP is the supreme body of the Convention, which will oversee the implementation of the WHO FCTC. Its first session will take place in Geneva from 6-17 February 2006. A country becomes a contracting party to the WHO FCTC 90 days after the deposit of a valid instrument of ratification or equivalent at the UN headquarters in New York. Therefore, for a Member State to participate as full Party during the entire Conference it is vital that the deposit of the instrument be done before 8 November 2005.

During the first COP, Parties will take decisions in technical, procedural and financial matters relating to the implementation of the Treaty such as the establishment of the permanent Secretariat, funding and financial support and monitoring and reporting on implementation progress among others.

"With the deposit of China's ratification, the total population protected by the Treaty is now over four billion, more than half the world's population. We are calling for more countries to join for the first Conference of the Parties, which will be decisive in shaping the future of global tobacco control," said Dr Catherine Le Galès-Camus, WHO Assistant Director-General for noncommunicable diseases and mental health.

The WHO FCTC currently has 89 Parties. Another 105 countries are eligible to become parties to the Treaty. (*)

Notes to editors:

The WHO FCTC has provisions that set international standards on tobacco price and tax increases, tobacco advertising and sponsorship, labelling, illicit trade and second-hand tobacco smoke among others.

For current status and full text of the WHO FCTC, please visit:
www.who.int/tobacco/areas/framework/signing_ceremony/countrylist/en/

For further information, please contact Marta Seoane, Communications Officer, Tobacco Free Initiative, WHO Geneva, Tel: +41 22 791 2489, mobile +41 79 475 5551, email: seoanem@who.int. All WHO News Releases, Fact Sheets and Features as well as other information on this subject can be obtained on Internet on the WHO home page: <http://www.who.int/>.